U Gordon E-6, 9 (no c no) 1927 ART Khasi ART

SECTION IV.

RELIGION.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF KHASI RELIGION.

The Khasis have a vague belief in a God the Creator, U Blei Nongthaw, although this deity, owing, no doubt, to the influences of the matriarchate, is frequently given the attributes of the feminine gender, cf., Ka ïei Nongthaw. The Khasis cannot, however, be said to worship the Supreme God, although it is true that they sometimes invoke him when sacrificing and in times of trouble. The religion of the Khasis may be described as animism or spirit-worship, or rather, the propitiation of spirits both good and evil on certain occasions, principally in times of trouble. The propitiation of these spirits is carried out either by priests (*lyngdohs*), or by old men well versed in the arts of necromancy, and as the *lyngdoh* or wise man deals with good as well as evil spirits, and, as often as not, with the good spirits of ancestors, the propitiation of these spirits may be said to partake of the nature of Shamanism. A very prominent feature of the Khasi beliefs is the propitiation of ancestors; but this will be described separately. There is a vague belief amongst the Khasi of a future state. It is believed that the spirits of the dead, whose funeral ceremonies have been duly performed, go to the house or garden of God, where there are groves of betel-nut trees; hence the expression for the departed, *ube ban kwai ha sing u blei* (he who is eating betel-nut in God's house), the idea of supreme happiness to the Khasi being to eat betel-nut uninterruptedly. The spirits of those whose funeral ceremonies have not been duly performed are believed to take the forms of animals, birds, or

InCustom E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 ART 5

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [